UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECA/TRADE/89/12
1 August 1989

Original: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Joint UNCTAD/ASTRO/ECA Business Meeting
Between African Trading Organizations
and State Trading Organizations of
Socialist Coutnries of Eastern Europe

Port Louis, Mauritius
26-28 October 1989

AIDE-MEMOIRE

JOINT UNCTAD/ASTRO/ECA/BUSINESS MEETING BETWEEN AFRICAN TRADING ORGANIZATIONS AND STATE TRADING ORGANIZATIONS OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE

Aide Memoire

I. Background

1. The geographical and structural diversification of trade patterns as a means of reducing the imbalances of Africa's present trade relations would go a long way in changing Africa's traditional role in the prevailing distribution of labour and in international trade. Multiplying the trading partners and improving on the range of traded commodities would further help both African and socialist countries of Eastern Europe to break with the predominantly triangular trade patterns which have put the two groups of countries in a situation of «asymetric competition» whereby market conditions are imposed on them by third parties.

2. The African Heads of States and Government have called for the promotion and expansion of trade between Africa and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe (Lagos Plan of Action, Chapter 251(b)). The technical cooperation programmes hitherto designed and carried out by UNCTAD in cooperation with ECA had analysed the issues and submitted the findings to seminars and other forums for their consideration. The member States adopted relevant policies and measures with a view to creating the appropriate framework for the enhancement of trade.

3. Within the emerging context favouring operational autonomy of trading corporations in both groups of countries, there is a need to promote a second generation of actions which will address the issue of direct trading contacts between operators over products, projects and services to be exchanged.

II. Objectives of the Meeting

4. The purpose of this business meeting is to bring together trading organizations of Africa and Eastern Europe to discuss immediate and prospective business relations to be initiated and/or developed through direct contacts.

5. State trading organizations participating in the meeting will be expected to draw lists of products, projects and services of export and import interest for them and will determine modalities for their trading (countertrade etc...). They will also work out follow up mechanisms for the enhancement of direct trading contacts (visits, exhibitions, long term contracts etc...).

III. Papers, documents and exhibits

6. Background papers on trade between Africa and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe will be made available to the participants by UNCTAD and ECA. Lists of import and export requirements of participating trading corporations will also be circulated. It is also planned that arrangements be made to accommodate exhibitions participants might wish to bring along with them.

IV. Expected outcome of the meeting

7. The meeting is expected to produce the following results:

(a) to offer a forum for direct contacts between traders of both groups of countries and possibly for the immediate initiation of business relations.

(b) to determine demand and supply capacities of participating organizations as well as trading conditions.

(c) to provide an institutional framework for a follow up to established direct business contacts.

V. Participants

8. Participants are invited from all African and East European countries (each country may be represented by executives of at least 2 trading organizations) government representatives might be admitted as observers.

VI. Cost of participation

9. Travel costs and daily subsistance allowance will be borne by participating trading organizations, each for its own representatives.

VII. Date and Venue of the Meeting

10. The meeting will take place from 26 to 28 October 1989 in Port Louis, Mauritius.